

Message Text

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AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 1732

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, TU

SUBJECT: COMMENTS ON KORUTURK'S SECOND APPEAL FOR
NATIONAL COALITION

REF: ANKARA 1720

1. IN RENAMING IRMAK PRIMIN-DESIGNATE, PRESIDENT KORUTURK
AGAIN HAS SOUGHT TO BREAK IMPASSE AMONG PARTIES VIA FORMULA
OF INDEPENDENT-LED NATIONAL COALITION. IN SO DOING, HE HAS:

A. PASSED OVER STRONGEST CONTENDER FOR POWER, NATIONALIST
FRONT, WHICH IS ONLY SEVEN VOTES SHORT OF MAJORITY AND
BELIEVES IT COULD GET THOSE VOTES IF DESIGNATED TO FORM GOVERNMENT.

B. BOOSTED POSSIBILITY OF REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY'S
(RPP) RETURN TO POWER IN COALITION WITH DEMOCRATIC PARTY,
WHICH WAS ECEVIT'S HOPE WHEN HE RESIGNED PREMIERSHIP
LAST SEPTEMBER;

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C. PROMOTED EARLY ELECTIONS, WHICH HAVE BEEN RPP'S

PRIME OBJECTIVE (AND WHICH JUSTICE PARTY HAS COME ROUND TO SUPPORT ON CONDITION OF ELECTION LAW CHANGES).

2. KORUTURK'S DECISION TO PROMOTE NATIONAL COALITION IS CONSISTENT WITH STRONG CONCERN HE EXPRESSED IN MARCH 1 ADDRESS TO NATION REGARDING NEED FOR "POLITICAL ARMISTICE" AND REDUCTION OF DOMESTIC TENSION. HOWEVER, HIS UNWILLINGNESS TO PUSH ALTERNATIVE OF NATIONALIST FRONT GOVERNMENT PROBABLY REFLECTS DISTRUST OF MORE EXTREME COMPONENTS OF FRONT (ESPECIALLY NATIONALIST ACTION PARTY AND NATIONAL SALVATION PARTY) AS REGARDS THEIR POSITIONS BOTH ON CYPRUS PROBLEM AND ON INTERNAL POLICIES. APPARENT INVOLVEMENT OF ELEMENTS OF THESE LATTER PARTIES IN RECENT WAVE OF CIVIL DISTURBANCES COULD WELL HAVE HELPED DISQUALIFY THEM IN HIS EYES.

3. KORUTURK GAVE EXTRA STRENGTH TO HIS APPEAL FOR UNITY BY REMINDING CITIZENS THAT HIS OATH OF OFFICE, SPELLED OUT IN ARTICLE 96 OF CONSTITUTION, PLEDGES HIM TO "FIGHT AGAINST ANY THREAT DIRECTED AGAINST THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE TURKISH STATE OR AGAINST THE INTEGRITY OF THE FATHERLAND AND THE NATION." HE THUS GAVE RING OF NEAR-EMERGENCY TO GOVERNMENT CRISIS AND CONCURRENT DOMESTIC UNREST.

4. AT THIS POINT, KORUTURK SEEMS TO HAVE DONE ALL THAT IS WITHIN HIS LIMITED POWERS TO RESOLVE IMPASSE ON BASIS OF NATIONAL COALITION. FAILURE OF THIS SECOND CONSECUTIVE SUCH ATTEMPT WOULD BE HEAVY BLOW TO HIS PRESTIGE. SPECULATION THAT HE MIGHT RESORT TO HIS ULTIMATE WEAPON, RESIGNATION, SURFACED MARCH 3 IN GUNAYDIN, WHICH WROTE THAT KORUTURK DETERMINED LEAVE PRESIDENCY IF NO GOVERNMENT FORMED BY MARCH 6.
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